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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

William Wegman: New & Improved
Altered Photographs, Postcard Collages and Paintings

2 March – 22 April 2006

Sperone Westwater is pleased to announce an exhibition of early altered photographs, works on paper and new paintings by William Wegman to coincide with the opening of the artist's retrospective, "William Wegman: Funney/Strange" at the Brooklyn Museum.

Wegman has been altering photographs through drawing since the 1970s. Interested in issues of perception and identity, Wegman used wordplay and simple line drawings to turn black and white photographs into simultaneously humorous and strange images/documents that destabilize the familiar and reveal life's essential oddity. Some later works on paper incorporate postcards and greeting cards and the viewer is never quite sure where the printed image ends and Wegman's drawing begins. Always present in Wegman's work is a smart, gently subversive humor that adds dimension and a kind of metamorphosis to what first appears to be an uncomplicated visual statement.

Over the past ten years, Wegman has expanded this concept to painting, using vintage postcards to generate large painted landscapes. Mounting postcards from his vast personal collection onto wooden panels, Wegman enhances and embellishes a detail from one card and connects it to the next with rich painterly passages, weaving in and out of each added found image to create a dreamlike landscape of disparate interior and exterior spaces. In one painting, two hobos under a bridge and a couple dressed for flamenco dancing inhabit a strange ecosystem that includes a polar bear, a red cardinal, a team of iron horses and a cruise ship that floats gently on a placid sea. In another, a golden Buddha presides over various pin-up girls while an airplane flies over the atrium of the new MoMA. In Wegman's paintings, countries, epochs, and cultures collide and the joys of travel and exploration rule. In a single panel, open roadways lead to impossible destinations; it is at once summer in Nice, France and snowing in Boise, Idaho. As Peter Schjeldahl comments about Wegman's painted world, "This is the cosmos of the serious child, who daydreams to lay hold of a reality conceived to be stable and ultimately accessible." Eight new paintings will be included in the exhibition.

Born in Holyoke, Massachusetts, in 1943, Wegman received a B.F.A from the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston and an M.F.A from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. His work has been exhibited extensively both in the U.S. and abroad, including solo exhibitions at the Walker Art Center (1982), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1988), Whitney Museum of American Art (1992), and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2001).

Sperone Westwater's exhibition coincides with "William Wegman: Funney/Strange," a major retrospective exploring 40 years of the artist's work in all media, which opens at the Brooklyn Museum on 10 March and continues its tour at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., the Norton Museum of Art, Palm Beach, FL, and the Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA. A major exhibition catalogue, written by Joan Simon and published by Yale University Press, will accompany the retrospective.

An opening reception for the artist will be held on 2 March from 6-8 pm. For more information as well as photographic images, please contact Molly Epstein at Sperone Westwater at (212) 999-7337, or info@speronewestwater.com. Also please find further documentation on our website: www.speronewestwater.com.